

A BAYOU MYSTIC FILMS PRODUCTION

BOUDREAUX

THE 13TH SACRIFICE

Written & Directed by Antonio R. Ward Jr. • New Orleans, 1938

CASTING SIDES — SELF-TAPE

SCARLET BOUDREAUX

LEAD • AGE: 17 (playable 16–22)

THE CHARACTER

The daughter of the wealthiest family in the Garden District — and the most watched, most managed, least free girl in New Orleans. Sharp enough to see the arithmetic of her own arranged life and brave enough to name it out loud. Raised behind iron gates, educated by nuns, groomed to be presented, matched, and merged. What her father calls protection, she calls a locked door.

Scarlet is not a scream queen and not a wilting Southern flower. She is intelligent, quietly funny, and dangerously willful — a girl who has spent seventeen years being looked at like a portrait or a price, now reaching for the one thing she chose for herself. Her love is real, her grief is fresh, and her fury is the engine of the entire film.

ABOUT THE SCENE

In this scene, Scarlet comes to the family's healer in the middle of the night — desperate, furious, and grieving — to beg for a way to undo her father's plans for her life. We need to see the full range: control, persuasion, fire, and finally the break underneath it all. The reader plays MAMA VIVIENNE.

SELF-TAPE INSTRUCTIONS

- Slate: name, height, location, representation (if any), and the role you are reading for.
- Frame from the chest up, in good light, with a neutral background. Reader off-camera.
- Period voice welcome, but truth first — do not let the accent drive the scene.
- Two takes maximum. Label your file: LASTNAME_FIRSTNAME_SCARLET.

INT. MAMA VIVIENNE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Scarlet slips in, still in her nightdress, tear-streaked, furious, desperate. Vivienne is awake. Herbs drying overhead. A single candle.

SCARLET

You help people. The whole house comes to you. Burns, fevers, a baby that won't turn, a man that won't leave. You fix it. Mama, I need you to fix something.

Vivienne doesn't look up from her herbs. But her hands slow.

MAMA VIVIENNE

I ease things, baby. Easin' and fixin' are cousins, not twins.
(a dry glance)
And it's late for either one.
What's got you out your bed with your face all done up like a Tuesday funeral.

SCARLET

He's marrying me to Beaumont. He forbade Pierre. He forbade all of it, like closing a book.
(rushing now)
There's a way. There's a way to soften him, to turn him, I know there is, I've watched you my whole life, Mama, I've seen what you do when you think the kitchen's asleep--

Vivienne goes very still. Sets down the herbs. The warmth in the room cools by one degree.

MAMA VIVIENNE

(quiet)
Now you listen to how careful I'm about to talk to you.
(a beat)
Who told you I know things.

SCARLET

Nobody had to. I have eyes.

Vivienne looks at her a long moment. At the grief in her. At the love. At the fury underneath both, which is the dangerous one. And something the old woman has held shut for a lifetime creaks, just once, on its hinge.

MAMA VIVIENNE

(sitting, heavily; older
suddenly)

Mm. You got her eyes too. That's
the trouble.

(a breath)

There are ways, Scarlet. Old ways.
Older than this house, older than
that church they sent you to,
older than the whole pretty lie
this city tells itself on Sunday.
Ways to turn a heart that's set
hard as a andiron.

SCARLET

Then--

MAMA VIVIENNE

I ain't done.

(and now the wit is gone,
and what's under it is
worse)

Every last one of them asks a
price. Hear me. The old road does
not give, child. It lends. And
whatever it lends you -- a turned
heart, a good harvest, thirteen
years of a family's luck -- one
cold night it comes walking back
up the road to collect. With
interest. It is the most patient
creditor God ever allowed to keep
breathing.

SCARLET

I'll pay it. Whatever it costs.
I'll pay it.

Vivienne's hand shoots out and grips Scarlet's wrist.
Hard. Fast. The comic warmth nowhere in her face now.

MAMA VIVIENNE

(low, fierce)

Don't you EVER say that. Not in my
room. Not out loud. Not where it
can hear you.

(letting go, shaken by her
own reaction)

You do not name a price before you
know its name. That is the first
thing. That is the only thing.
Girls been ending whole families
since before Bonaparte, offering
to pay a bill they never once
read.

Scarlet takes Vivienne's weathered hands in hers.

SCARLET

Then find out its name. Please.
You're the only one left who ever
let me choose anything.

(breaking)

Sister Francis is dead, Mama.
Everyone who ever told me I was
allowed to be a person is dying or
gone. Please. Help me keep the one
that's left.

And that, not the request, but the grief, is what undoes
Mama Vivienne.

She looks at Scarlet a long, long moment.

Then closes her eyes.

MAMA VIVIENNE

(barely audible)

God forgive me. She has her
mother's face.

(a breath; then, decided)

...Put on your dark shawl. And
your quiet feet. We don't have to
go far.

(off Scarlet's look)

You think the old road live way
out in some swamp, hours from
here? No, baby. It live right
where the mowed grass stops. It
always been closer than they let
you believe.